



## **AMERICA/MEXICO - 40 deaths in 15 days, blackmails and threats also to priests and members of the Church**

Netzahualcoyotl (Agenzia Fides) - The Bishop of the diocese of Netzahualcoyotl, His Exc. Msg. Luis Hector Morales Sánchez, who alleged that the priests who work in the eastern part of the State of Mexico have been threatened with death by members of organized crime. At least 10 priests of the diocese of Netzahualcoyotl, which also includes the towns of Ixtapaluca mexiquenses and Los Reyes La Paz, had to give money to criminal organizations to avoid being killed. In some statements to the press, collected by Fides Agency, the Bishop said that there are also a number of ministers of the Catholic Church who have received telephone threats.

"Fortunately, thank God, there is no crying deaths and violence, rather there is psychological violence through extortion. Few priests have given money, others have been able to handle the situation. Luckily we have had the support of the authorities in these difficult cases," said the Bishop.

The authorities of the State of Mexico have expressed concern over the wave of killings in the last two weeks: almost 40 people have died in the capital and in the suburbs. For the Prosecutor of this state, Miguel Angel Contreras, there is a relationship between the increase in violence and the growing presence of criminal gangs, the "cartels" La Familia Michoacana, Los Zetas and a new group called Guerreros Unidos. The authorities in the capital do not agree with this hypothesis. According to the government of President Enrique Peña Nieto, the violence of crime has left more than 70,000 deaths during the government (2006-2012) of his predecessor, Felipe Calderón. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 22/01/2013)